

Childers Leads Bipartisan Group to Protect School Resources, Save Jobs in North Mississippi

Childers sends letter to President urging for Reauthorizing Secure Rural Schools

Friday, July 16, 2010

Washington, DC – Today, U.S. Reps. Travis Childers (MS-01) led a bipartisan group of 69 House Members in sending a letter to the President urging him to include a long-term reauthorization of the *Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act* (SRSCA) in his 2012 budget. A group of 26 senators recently sent a similar letter to the President.

“Without a comprehensive long-term solution to reductions in Secure Rural Schools funding, counties in North Mississippi will be forced to cut education resources for our children and lay off teachers,” said Childers. “Budget cuts at the state level have already slashed education funding and jobs in our district, and we simply can’t afford to lose more. I hope the President listens to calls from myself and my colleagues to reauthorize this critical legislation, and I will continue working with Members on both sides of the aisle to ensure our schools have the resources they need to save jobs and provide our children with a quality education.”

“Secure Rural Schools provides essential funding to our communities, schools, and infrastructure that we’d be extremely hard-pressed to do without, especially under today’s economic climate,” said Bill Newsom, Chairman of the Secure Rural Schools Coalition Advisory Committee for the State of Mississippi. “We thank Congressman Childers for his leadership in working to reauthorize this important legislation, and we will continue to support his efforts to protect jobs and education in Mississippi.”

SRSCA is a program providing assistance to rural counties and school districts affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal land. Historically, rural counties have relied on a share of receipts from timber harvests to supplement local funding for education services and roads. The steep decline in timber sales decreased the revenues that rural counties and school districts received from these timber sales. Congress passed SRSCA in 2000 to stabilize

the payments to counties and to compensate for lost revenue.

SRSCA expired during the previous administration. In 2007, Congress gave counties a one-year extension. In 2008, Congress, with Childers' support, approved a four-year extension with phased-down funding levels.

SRSCA provides funding to 33 Mississippi counties – 9 in the First District – for schools, infrastructure, and other vital services. In 2008, Mississippi school districts and counties received \$8.9 million in funding from SRSCA. Statewide funding totals \$30.9 million from 2008-2011.

Failure to extend the SRSCA in 2012 would have a devastating impact on rural economies, employment, and school districts across the nation. In Mississippi, there were 104,472 students enrolled in 38 school districts that received SRSCA funding in 2008.

Reauthorization of SRSCA will prevent a 75% cut in funding – from \$8.9 million in 2008 to \$2.2 million in 2012, or a loss of \$6.7 million. It will also help continue to provide rural communities with the financial resources they need to help Mississippi students better compete on a national level, and will protect much-needed revenue to attract and keep talented teachers.

A pro-gun, pro-life Mississippian, Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) represents the First Congressional District in North Mississippi. He is a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition and serves on the House Agriculture and Financial Services Committee. Congressman Childers co-chairs the reestablished bipartisan Congressional Rural Caucus and was appointed to the bipartisan Second Amendment Task Force. For more information, visit www.childers.house.gov